

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ATHENS 00539 191547Z
ACTION SCS-06

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P 191403Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4198

UNCLAS ATHENS 0539

FOR SCS

H-PASS: HONORABLE BILL GOODLING
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C.

E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: CASC, GR, (GRAF, ANDREW)

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST; COMPLAINT OF ANDREW GRAF

1. EMBASSY ATHENS HAS RECEIVED JANUARY 17 VIA THE STATE DEPARTMENT
YOUR INQUIRY OF DECEMBER 22, 1977 ON BEHALF OF YOUR CONSTITUENT, MR.
ANDREW GRAF, WHO COMPLAINS OF A LACK OF EMBASSY ASSISTANCE FOLLOWING
AN INJURY TO HIS WIFE HERE.

2. ON THE WEEKEND IN QUESTION, MR. RYAN, WHO WAS THE EMBASSY DUTY
OFFICER, DID PROVIDE MR. GRAF WITH INFORMATION CONCERNING THE
POSSIBILITY OF MILITARY AIR EVACUATION FOR HIS WIFE, BUT INFORMED HIM
ALSO THAT THIS WAS NOT A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE. WHILE THE EMBASSY
HAS ON RARE OCCASIONS IN THE PAST BEEN ABLE TO PLACE CIVILIAN
AMERICANS ON MILITARY FLIGHTS, THESE WERE CASES OF LIFE AND DEATH
AND THE COST, EVEN IN THESE CASES, WAS PROHIBITIVELY HIGH.

3. MR. RYAN THEREFORE RECOMMENDED TO THE GRAFS THAT THEY
RETURN TO THE US VIA COMMERCIAL AIRLINE FACILITIES AND PROVIDED MR.
GRAF WITH THE APPROPRIATE TELEPHONE NUMBERS AT THE LOCAL TWA OFFICE.
MR. GRAF ACCEPTED THIS INFORMATION AND, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, DID NOT CON-
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THE EMBASSY AGAIN THE CASE THEREFORE DID NOT COME TO THE ATTENTION
OF THE PROTECTION AND WELFARE UNIT OF OUR CONSULAR SECTION. MR. GRAF
DID NOT MENTION BEING "STRANDED" AND APPEARED TO HAVE THE
NECESSARY FUNDS TO DEFRAY THE EXPENSES INCURRED. HE VOICED NO COMPLAINT
INT

AT THE TIME, ONLY HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE NON-AVAILABILITY OF
MILITARY TRANSPORTATION.

4. FOR YOUR INFORMATION, THE EMBASSY HAD A NUMBER OF SIMILAR
CASES THIS PAST SUMMER, USUALLY INVOLVING ELDERLY AMERICANS
INJURED IN A FALL. IF THE INJURED PERSON DECLINED TREATMENT
HERE IN GREECE, THE WELFARE AND PROTECTION UNIT WAS USUALLY
SUCCESSFUL IN ASSISTING WITH THE NECESSARY MEDICAL FORMS AND TRAVEL
ARRANGEMENTS (FOUR FIRST CLASS SEATS MUST BE BOOKED, SEATS REMOVED,
AMBULANCES ARRANGED, ETC.). THE FINAL AUTHORITY FOR PERMISSION TO
TRANSPORT THE INJURED PERSON, HOWEVER, RESTS WITH THE HOME OFFICE
OF THE AIRLINE INVOLVED (IN THE CASE OF TWA, IN KANSAS CITY),
ONCE THAT OFFICE IS SATISFIED THE PATIENT IS FIT TO TRAVEL. AS THIS
CAN REQUIRE TWO OR THREE DAYS, THE PATIENT AND ACCOMPANYING SPOUSE
SOMETIMES BECOME UNDERSTANDABLY RESTIVE. HOWEVER, PLEASE
BE ASSURED THAT THE EMBASSY MAKES EVERY EFFORT BOTH TO COMFORT
AND TO ASSIST AMERICAN TRAVELERS IN SUCH DISTRESS, AND USES ITS GOOD
OFFICES WHEN FEASIBLE AND APPROPRIATE TO BRING ABOUT THEIR SPEEDY
REPATRIATION. AS IT IS A TRAUMATIC, UNCOMFORTABLE AND EXPENSIVE PRO-
CEDURE, HOWEVER, THE EMBASSY'S ROLE AT TIME IS UNFORTUNATELY SEEN IN
AN UNFLATTERING LIGHT.

AMERICAN EMBASSY
ATHENS, GREECE
MILLS

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NNN

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